FS-13/986

ABSENTEE VOTING:

How To Do It

An Informational Brochure on Absentee Voting
For
U.S. Military Personnel & U.S. Citizens Overseas

DoD FS-13

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INTRODUCTION

THE RIGHT TO VOTE CAN BE EXERCISED BY ALL UNITED STATES CITIZENS IN EVERY CORNER OF THE WORLD. MEMBERS OF THE MILITARY, OTHER UNIFORMED SERVICES, THE MERCHANT MARINE AND THEIR ELIGIBLE SPOUSES AND DEPENDENTS AND ALL OTHER U.S. CITIZENS OVERSEAS ARE ABLE TO VOTE UNDER THE FEDERAL VOTING ASSISTANCE ACT (FVAA) OR THE OVERSEAS CITIZENS VOTING RIGHTS ACT (OCVRA).

THE ACTUAL PROCEDURES TO VOTE ABSENTEE VARY FROM STATE TO STATE. THIS BROCHURE ANSWERS THE MOST FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS CONCERNING ABSENTEE VOTING.

GENERAL INFORMATION

Can I Vote Absentee?

Basically all U.S. citizens 18 years or older who are or will be residing outside the United States during an election period are eligible to vote absentee in any Federal election. In addition, all members of the Armed Forces, their spouses and dependents and members of the Merchant Marine and their spouses and dependents, who are U.S. citizens, may also vote absentee in State and local elections.

What Is A Federal Election?

A "Federal Election" is any general, special, or primary election held solely or in part for the purpose of selecting, nominating or electing any candidate for the office of President, Vice President, Presidential elector, Member of the United States Senate, Member of the United States House of Representatives, Delegate from the District of Columbia, Resident Commissioner of the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, Delegate from Guam or Delegate from the Virgin Islands.

I Would Like to Vote But Don't Know How, Where Can I Find Assistance?

Specific information on applying for absentee registration and a ballot is contained in the *Voting Assistance Guide*. This *Guide* is available from voting assistance officers/counselors assigned to units of military installations and at each U.S. Embassy or Consulate. The *Guide* is also available at many U.S. citizen organizations overseas, corporate offices of U.S. companies and also available for sale to the public from the Superintendent of Documents, Government Printing Office in Washington, D.C.

How Do I Ap

The Federal
convenient meth
cation of regist
application for
the same source
may also send a
or town clerk.

Do I Have
Absentee?

Registration re
states will allow
request an abse
However, other
FPCA forms; c
request an absen

Where Do I S

Chapter three
procedures for e
under the headin
list of addresses

When Is Th
Absentee Bal

Generally, FPC
received by elect
the date of an el
ample time to pr
are applying for
the FPCA may ha
for further inform

When Should

The majority of
mailing ballots to
an election. If y
10 to 12 days
election official to
Military personne
voting officer. A
ballot regardless
decisions will re
election day, bu
Write-in Ballot".

Must I Subm
Each Election?

In many states y
for each election.
for all ballots iss
doubt send a se

ly For An Absentee Ballot?

st Card Application (FPCA) is the most
l accepted by all states as either an appli-
tion forms or for registration or as an
sentee ballot. FPCAs are available from
as those listed above for the *Guide*. You
vritten request for a ballot to your county

To Be Registered To Vote

irements vary from state to state. Many
the voter to simultaneously register and
e ballot by submitting a single FPCA.
ates may require the use of two separate
to register, and a second FPCA to
ballot.

nd My FPCA?

t the *Guide* outlines absentee voting
h state. In your state of residence, and
of "Where to Apply" you will find a
for county and local election officials.

Best Time To Apply For An t?

s requesting a ballot only, should be
officials at least forty-five days before
ion. This should allow election officials
ess the request and mail a ballot. If you
oth registration and an absentee ballot,
to be mailed earlier. Consult the *Guide*
ion on state deadlines.

Receive My Ballot?

ates, under normal circumstances, begin
oters between 20 and 45 days prior to
have not received your ballot within
fore the election, contact your local
determine when your ballot was mailed.
may obtain assistance from their unit
ays execute and return your absentee
when you receive it. Sometimes court
re the counting of ballots voted by
received late. See also "Alternative

A Separate Application For

will need to submit a separate FPCA
ome states will accept a single FPCA
d during an election year. When in
rate application for each election.

If I Am Required To Have My FPCA Or Ballot Notarized, How Do I Do It?

Generally, election materials may be witnessed or sworn to before a notary, U.S. Commissioned Officer, Embassy or Consular officer or other official authorized to administer oaths. Several states do not require notarization of the FPCA or ballot, therefore consult Chapter three of the *Guide* to determine your state's requirements. In all instances you must sign the FPCA.

When Returning An FPCA Or Other Election Material To My State, Do I Have To Pay Postage?

Generally, all election related materials are mailed postage paid from any APO or FPO mail facility, all U.S. Embassies and Consulates and any post office in the U.S. You must pay postage if the materials are mailed from a non-U.S. postal facility.

Where Can I Find Information On State And Local Issues While Overseas?

You may consider subscribing to a hometown newspaper or relying on friends and relatives for information on state and local issues. Also, the League of Women Voters with regional offices located throughout the country publishes information of this sort. Their main office is: 1730 M Street, N.W. Washington, D.C. 20036.

Where Would I Obtain Information On Issues And Positions Taken By Candidates?

In addition to reading U.S. news magazines and newspapers, both the Democratic and Republican Parties maintain overseas offices and have information pertaining to candidates and issues. They can be contacted by writing:

Democrats Abroad
157 Route du Grand Lancy
1213 Onex, Geneva
Switzerland

Republicans Abroad
310 First Street, SE
Washington, DC 20003

What Is An Alternative Write-In Ballot For Overseas Voters?

An overseas voter who has applied 30 days before a Federal Election for a ballot and has not received it, may submit from outside the U.S. an alternative write-in ballot. This ballot will be available through voting assistance officers at military installations or voting counselors at Embassies and Consulates. Special conditions apply for use of this ballot.

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MILITARY

What Is My "Legal State Of Residence"?

As used in reference to voting, your "legal state of residence" is the state in which you last resided prior to entering military service or the state which you have since claimed as your legal residence. Even if you no longer maintain formal ties such as property ownership to that residence, the address is needed to place you in a proper voting district or ward. Therefore, be sure to enter the complete address of that residence, including street or rural route and number, when completing the residence section of the FPCA.

Can I Vote Where I Am Stationed?

As a military member you may vote in the state where you are stationed if you change your legal residence to that state. Be advised that there are legal obligations which you may incur, such as taxation, when changing your state of residence. Therefore, consult a legal officer before making such a decision. There are no provisions for personnel stationed outside the United States to vote where they are stationed.

My Dependents Are Not In The Military, Can They Also Vote Absentee?

The law entitles both the eligible spouse and dependents of a military member to vote absentee. Spouses and dependents are considered to be in the same category of absentee voter as military members and generally should follow the same procedures. Dependents of military members residing overseas, who are U.S. citizens and who have never resided within the U.S., may usually claim their parents' legal state of residence as their own.

OVERSEAS CITIZENS

If I Do Not Maintain A Legal Residence In The U.S., What Is My "Legal State Of Residence?"

Your "legal state of residence" when used in reference to voting is the state where you last resided immediately prior to your departure from the United States. This right extends to overseas citizens even though they may not have property or other ties in their last state of residence and their intent to return to that state may be uncertain. When completing the residence section of the FPCA, be sure to enter your entire mailing address of that last residence including, street or rural route and number. This information is necessary to place you in the proper voting district or ward.

Will I Be Taxed By My Last State Of Residence If I Vote Absentee?

Exercising your right to vote in *Federal elections only* does not affect the determination of residence or domicile for purposes of any tax imposed under Federal, state or local law. Voting in a *Federal election only* may not be used as the sole basis to determine residency for the purpose of imposing state and local taxes. If a person claims a particular state as his/her residence and has other ties with that state in addition to voting, then that person may be liable for state and local taxation, depending upon that particular state law. Consult the *Guide* for information on probable tax obligations.

Can I Register Or Vote At the Embassy Or Consulate?

There are no provisions for regular absentee voting or registration to be conducted at U.S. Embassies or Consulates. U.S. Embassy and Consular officials function solely to assist U.S. citizens in processing FPCA forms, witnessing or notarizing FPCA forms (if required), and to provide other absentee voting information. Embassy and Consulate locations serve also as a mailing point from where FPCA forms and other election materials are mailed back to your local voting jurisdiction in the U.S. where absentee registration and ballot requests are actually completed.

ANY QUESTIONS WHICH CANNOT BE ANSWERED BY A VOTING OFFICER OR COUNSELOR SHOULD BE DIRECTED TO THE:

DIRECTOR, FEDERAL VOTING ASSISTANCE PROGRAM
OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY OF DEFENSE
PENTAGON, RM 1B 457
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20301

AMERICA BY CHOICE
NOT CHANCE

VOTE

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